

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A medical device ~~for attaching soft tissue to a bone~~ comprising a push-in bone anchor and a protective cover, the cover comprising formed from a solid, non-hollow, non-inflatable a brittle mass of biocompatible material, wherein said the push-in bone anchor is substantially encapsulated in said the mass, the cover breaking when the anchor is implanted into bone.

2 (canceled).

3 (canceled).

4 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 1, wherein said mass comprises a bioabsorbable material.

5 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable material is selected from the group consisting of cross-linked alginate gel, cross-linked collagen, cross-linked hyaluronic acid hydrogel, polylactic-co-glycolic acid, polylactic acid, polyglycolic acid, polyurethane.

6 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 1, further comprising an antimicrobial material.

7 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 6, wherein said antimicrobial material comprises an antibiotic.

8 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 7, wherein said antibiotic is selected from the group consisting of nafcillin, aminoglycoside, ciprofloxacin, piperacillin/tazobactam, ampicillin/sulbactam, vancomycin, cephalosporin, TMP/SMX, ampicillin, gentamicin, tobramycin, and ciprofloxacin.

9 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 8, wherein said antibiotic is disposed within a bioabsorbable material to form said protective cover.

10 (currently amended). The medical device ~~protective cover~~ of claim 8, wherein said antibiotic is applied to at least one surface of said protective cover.

11 (withdrawn). A method of inserting a bone anchor into a bone, comprising:

- (a) providing a bone anchor;
- (b) providing a protective cover adapted to encapsulate said bone anchor;
- (c) encapsulating said bone anchor in said protective cover;
- (d) locating a bone anchor implantation site on a bone; and
- (e) causing said bone anchor to penetrate said protective cover and implant in said bone.

12 (withdrawn). The method of claim 11, wherein said bone anchor is encapsulated in said protective cover prior to engagement of said bone anchor to an implantation device.

13 (withdrawn). The method of claim 11, wherein said bone anchor is encapsulated in said protective cover after engagement of said bone anchor to an implantation device.

14 (withdrawn). The method of claim 11, wherein said protective cover for encapsulating a bone anchor comprises a generally ellipsoidal mass.

15 (withdrawn). The method of claim 14, wherein said mass is substantially deformable.

16 (withdrawn). The method of claim 14, wherein said mass is substantially brittle.

17 (withdrawn). The method of claim 14, wherein said mass comprises a bioabsorbable material.

18 (withdrawn). The method of claim 17, wherein said bioabsorbable material is selected from the group consisting of cross-linked alginated gel, cross-linked collagen,

cross-linked hyaluronic acid hydrogel, polylactic-co-glycolic acid, polylactic acid, polyglycolic acid, polyurethane.

19 (withdrawn). The method of claim 18, wherein said protective cover further comprises an antibiotic.

20 (withdrawn). The method of claim 19, wherein said antibiotic is selected from the group consisting of nafcillin, aminoglycoside, ciprofloxin, piperacillin/tazobactam, ampicillin/sulbactam, vancomycin, cephalosporin, TMP/SMX, ampicillin, gentamicin, tobramycin, and ciprofloxacin.

21 (withdrawn). The method of claim 20, wherein said antibiotic is disposed within said bioabsorbable material to form said cover.

22 (withdrawn). The method of claim 20, wherein said antibiotic is applied to at least one surface of said protective cover.